

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

### LISTING OF CLAIMS:

**1. - 7. (cancelled)**

8. (currently amended): An adjustable-length pole, the pole comprising:

at least one outer tube;

an inner tube structured and dimensioned for insertion into the outer tube in a telescoping fashion for adjusting a length of the pole;

a limit stop disposed at an end of the inner tube;

an adjusting screw being axially oriented within the outer tube, non-rotatable with respect to the inner tube and supported in a fixed manner on the end of the inner tube;

a limit stop disposed on a free end of the adjusting screw;

a radially spreadable element with a non-threaded bore and with only one single inner cone, the inner cone opening towards the end of the inner tube, wherein the radially spreadable element is disposed with its axial length between the limit stop disposed at the end of the inner tube and the limit stop disposed on the free end of the adjusting screw, and wherein the distance between the limit stops is larger than the axial length of the radially spreadable element by a gap distance, such that the radially spreadable element is moveable axially within the distance between the limit stops, including the gap distance, without rotation of said element ~~thereof and is contactable with each limit stop~~; and

an interior element having an internal threaded bore and an outer cone tapering towards the free end of the adjusting screw and being structured, dimensioned, and disposed for cooperation with the inner cone of the radially spreadable element, wherein the interior element is screwed onto the adjusting screw and is axially movable with respect to the inner tube by rotation thereof via the internal threaded bore,

wherein the radially spreadable element and the interior element cooperate to form a spreading device supported axially at the end of the inner tube, the spreading device for clamping the inner tube within the outer tube,

wherein the inner tube and spreading device are inserted into the outer tube, and

wherein the radially spreadable element comprises a cylindrical shoulder having a smaller exterior diameter than a base of the radially spreadable element, and facing the inner tube, said shoulder being axially guidable by a guide piece attached to a limit stop surface at the end of the inner tube facing the radially spreadable element.

9. (previously presented): The pole of claim 8, wherein the pole is a ski or a walking stick.

**10. and 11. (cancelled)**

12. (previously presented): The adjustable-length pole of claim 8, wherein the limit stop disposed on the free end of the adjusting screw is a cap that is axially secured at the free end of the adjusting screw after the radially spreadable element has been set in place.

13. (withdrawn and currently amended): The adjustable-length pole of claim [[8]] 15, wherein the limit stop disposed on the free end of the adjusting screw is formed by a head that is molded onto the free end of the adjusting screw, with the radially spreadable element having a peripheral slot that extends along an entire axial length of the radially spreadable element.

14. (currently amended): The adjustable-length pole of claim [[11]] 8, wherein the spreading device has a plug that accommodates the adjusting screw in an axial and rotationally fixed manner, said plug being supported axially and in a rotationally fixed manner in the inner tube and defining the limit stop disposed at an end of the inner tube, said plug having an axially protruding guide member cooperating with said cylindrical shoulder of the radially spreadable element.

15. (currently amended): An adjustable-length pole, the pole comprising:  
at least one outer tube;

an inner tube structured and dimensioned for insertion into the outer tube in a telescoping fashion for adjusting a length of the pole;

a limit stop disposed at an end of the inner tube;  
an adjusting screw being axially oriented within the outer tube, non-rotatable with respect to the inner tube and supported in a fixed manner on the end of the inner tube;  
a limit stop disposed on a free end of the adjusting screw;  
a radially spreadable element with a non-threaded bore and with only one single inner cone, the inner cone opening towards the end of the inner tube, wherein the radially spreadable element is disposed with its axial length between the limit stop disposed at the end of the inner tube and the limit stop disposed on the free end of the adjusting screw, and wherein the distance between the limit stops is larger than the axial length of the radially spreadable element by a gap distance, such that the radially spreadable element is moveable axially within the distance between the limit stops, including the gap distance without rotation of said element thereof; and  
an interior element having an internal threaded bore and an outer cone tapering towards the free end of the adjusting screw and being structured, dimensioned, and disposed for cooperation with the inner cone of the radially spreadable element, wherein the interior element is screwed onto the adjusting screw and is axially movable with respect to the inner tube by rotation thereof via the internal threaded bore,  
wherein the radially spreadable element and the interior element cooperate to form a spreading device supported axially at the end of the inner tube, the spreading device for clamping the inner tube within the outer tube,  
wherein said radially spreadable element has a plurality of axial slots and said interior element has a plurality of radially protruding fins, each of said fins being guided in a respective axial slot of the radially spreadable element for axial movement of said fins within said slots, ~~and~~  
wherein said axial slots have an axial length which is larger than the axial length of said fins and respective pairs of said axial slots and said radially protruding fins structurally cooperate to permit said interior element to move axially as the adjusting screw is rotated with respect to said interior element without rotation of said radially spreadable element,  
wherein at least one of said axial slots extends over most but not all of an entire axial length of said radially spreadable element,  
wherein at least one of said axial slots extend to but not entirely through a shoulder portion of said radially spreadable element that is proximate said inner limit stop, and

wherein the inner tube and spreading device are inserted into the outer tube.

16. (currently amended): An adjustable-length pole, the pole comprising:

at least one outer tube;

an inner tube structured and dimensioned for insertion into the outer tube in a telescoping fashion for adjusting a length of the pole;

a limit stop disposed at an end of the inner tube;

an adjusting screw being axially oriented within the outer tube, non-rotatable with respect to the inner tube and supported in a fixed manner on the end of the inner tube;

a limit stop disposed on a free end of the adjusting screw;

a radially spreadable element with a non-threaded bore and with only one single inner cone, the inner cone opening towards the end of the inner tube, wherein the radially spreadable element is disposed with its axial length between the limit stop disposed at the end of the inner tube and the limit stop disposed on the free end of the adjusting screw, and wherein the distance between the limit stops is larger than the axial length of the radially spreadable element by a gap distance, such that the radially spreadable element is moveable axially within the distance between the limit stops, including the gap distance without rotation of said element ~~thereof~~; and

an interior element having an internal threaded bore and an outer cone tapering towards the free end of the adjusting screw and being structured, dimensioned, and disposed for cooperation with the inner cone of the radially spreadable element, wherein the interior element is screwed onto the adjusting screw and is axially movable with respect to the inner tube by rotation thereof via the internal threaded bore,

wherein the radially spreadable element and the interior element cooperate to form a spreading device supported axially at the end of the inner tube, the spreading device for clamping the inner tube within the outer tube,

wherein the radially spreadable element is configured as a pot having a base that is penetrated by ~~[[a]]~~ the free end area of the adjusting screw, facing away from the inner tube,

wherein said radially spreadable element has a plurality of axial slots and said interior element has a plurality of radially protruding fins, each of said fins being guided in a respective axial slot of the radially spreadable element, ~~and~~

wherein said axial slots have an axial length which is larger than the axial length of said fins and respective pairs of said axial slots and said radially protruding fins structurally cooperate to permit said interior element to move axially as the adjusting screw is rotated with respect to said interior element without rotation of said radially spreadable element,

wherein at least one of said axial slots extends over most but not all of an entire axial length of said radially spreadable element,

wherein at least one of said axial slots extend to but not entirely through a shoulder portion of said radially spreadable element that is proximate said inner limit stop, and

wherein the inner tube and spreading device are inserted into the outer tube.

**17. - 25. (cancelled).**

26. (currently amended): The adjustable-length pole as recited in claim 8 15, wherein ~~the inner tube and spreading device are inserted into the outer tube and~~, by a rotation of the inner tube with respect to the outer tube, the spreading device clamps the inner tube to the outer tube, thereby forming an effective adjusted length pole.